



State of Tennessee Department of Children's Services

Administrative Policies and Procedures: 14.1

Subject: Child Protective Services Risk Assessment

Supersedes: DCS 14.1, 04/01/01

Local Policy: No

Local Procedures: No

Training Required: No

Approved by:

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Application

To All Department Of Children's Services Child Protective Services Staff And Persons On Child And Family Teams.

Authority:

TCA 37-5-106, 37-1-406, 37-1-604

Policy

Case managers and supervisors shall consider the CPS risk factors at critical decision points in a case in order to assess family strengths and the risk of future harm to children. The Child Protective Services Strength and Risk Assessment (Form CS-0770) shall be used in all investigations except those involving residential, institutional, and substitute childcare facilities.

Procedures

A. CPS risk factors 1. Incident Factors

The incident factors provide a framework to assess the severity and frequency of the initial allegation reported to DCS.

- a) Severity/frequency of abuse
- b) Location of the injury
- c) Severity/frequency of neglect
- d) History of abuse or neglect

2. Child Factors

The child factors focus on specific behaviors and conditions of the child. Strengths in these areas may reduce the level of overall risk, whereas problems in these areas could increase the overall level of risk:

- a) Age and developmental status
- b) Perpetrator's access to child
- c) Child's presenting behavior
- d) Child's attachment/interaction with the primary caretaker
- e) Child's community visibility/isolation
- f) Peer/sibling interaction

3. Primary Caretaker Factors

The primary caretaker factors focus on the behaviors and conditions of the child's primary caretaker. Strengths in these areas may reduce the level of overall risk, whereas problems in these areas could increase the level of risk.

- a) Caretaker's attachment/interaction with the child
- b) Knowledge of parenting skills
- c) Caretaker's history of maltreatment
- d) Caretaker's physical/developmental/intellectual status
- e) Caretaker's emotional/mental health
- f) Caretaker's substance misuse: alcohol, illegal or prescription drugs
- g) Marital/cohabitant relationship
- h) Caretaker's criminal behavior

4. Family/Environmental Factors

These factors are associated with strengths and risks in the total living environment.

- a) Precipitating events/stressors
- b) Environmental conditions
- c) Availability of family support systems

5. Service Provision Factors

These factors are assessed after the family has received services to meet identified needs. They are designed to assess the family's progress in building strengths and resolution of risk.

- a) Caretaker's participation or cooperation with agency staff and/or service plan
- b) Progress of child/family in treatment

B. Rating the factors Each of the factors listed above must be rated by the case manager as follows:

1. **No Risk** – There are no risks identified in the family.
2. **Insufficient Information** – Unable to assess this area because of lack of information.
3. **Low Risk** – Risk is present but is not considered serious.
4. **Intermediate Risk** – Risk is present and some level of intervention is necessary to protect the child and to prevent further escalation of risk.
5. **High Risk** – These are major concerns that threaten the safety of the child.
6. **Not Applicable** – This factor does not fit this situation.
7. **Strength** – The family excels in a specific area and this is considered a strong point that reduces the level of risk to the child.

C. Overall risk rating After rating all factors individually, the case manager shall assess the overall risk to the child, considering the family's level of risk as well as the strengths that offset those risk issues. The overall risk rating choices are:

1. **High Risk** – The behaviors and the conditions present in

the family suggest a threat of harm to the child and immediate action is needed in order to ensure the safety of the child. This action may include a removal of the child or engaging the family in a home-based service delivery program.

2. **Intermediate Risk** – There is sufficient cause to be concerned about the safety of the child, but the family has strengths that may enable them to reduce the risk through a change effort.
3. **Low Risk** – There are some concerns in the family that could eventually present risk to the child. Family may be engaged in a change effort on a voluntary basis.
4. **No Risk** – There were no identified risks in the family.

D. Critical decision points to assess risk

Risk assessment is an ongoing process that shall occur from the point of intake throughout the life of the case. At a minimum, form CS – 0770, *Child Protective Services Strength and Risk Assessment*, shall be completed by Child Protective Services at the point of classification, when developing a permanency plan, and by Foster Care prior to a child being returned home after having been removed due to abuse or neglect.

E. Documentation of the risk assessment

1. Case managers shall document the individual and overall risk ratings on form CS-0770, *Child Protective Services Strength And Risk Assessment*, or appropriate computer screens at the conclusion of the investigation and prior to submitting the file to the team leader for classification.
2. All documented risk assessments shall be based upon observations, statements and/or professional opinions that can be verified by case documentation or contact with the collateral sources.

Forms/Templates

CS-0770 Child Protective Services Strength and Risk Assessment

Appropriate TN Kids Screens

Collateral Documents

Risk Assessment Matrix

Standards

None

Glossary

<i>Term</i>	<i>Definition</i>
<i>Risk and Strength Assessment</i>	The process of evaluating individual factors in order to identify behaviors and conditions that represent a family's strength or pose a threat of immediate and future harm to a child.